

Ezekiel 34:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

Analysis

This passage employs the shepherd metaphor to contrast failed human leaders with God as true Shepherd of Israel. Ancient Near Eastern kings commonly used shepherd imagery for their rule; Ezekiel exposes how Israel's leaders failed this calling by exploiting rather than caring for God's flock. From a Reformed perspective, this anticipates Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 10) who lays down His life for the sheep, and calls undershepherds (pastors/elders) to feed and protect God's flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). True shepherds serve the sheep's welfare, not their own interests, demonstrating Christlike servant leadership.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend

beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

הַיּוֹת יְשִׁעָה לְאָמֵן אָנִי כִּי תִּ

As I live H589 saith the Lord GOD H518

H2416 H5002 H136 H3069

H3808

H3282 H1961

לְכָל לְאַכְלָה צָאן יְתִתְהִיאָה צָאן יְ

and my flock became a prey and my flock became meat

H6629

H957

H1961

H6629

H402

H3605

מֵאָה מִן כָּשָׂדָה כִּי תִּ

As I live of the field H369

H2416 H7704

בְּעוֹנָה

דָּרְשָׁה וְאֶלְאָ

H3808

H1875

צָאן יְ אַת

בְּעוֹנָה

because there was no shepherd and my flock because there was no shepherd

H7462

H6629

H7462

בְּעוֹנָה

וְאַת אַזְתָּחָה

לְאָ

because there was no shepherd

H7462

H853

H853

and my flock

H3808

H6629

בְּעוֹנָה

because there was no shepherd

H7462

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:13 (Parallel theme): And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;